

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND
SPECIAL EDUCATION

Employment and Transportation
Committee Meeting

LOCATION

Governor's Council Conference Room
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska

Teleconference

Meeting Date
August 13, 2013
1:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Lucy Odden – Chair
Alexis Henning
David Levy

Guests:

Erin Atwood

Staff:

Rich Sanders

Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

Call to Order –1:02 p.m.
Roll Call

Welcome from the Chair

Lucy Odden opened the meeting by stating this is the first meeting of the Employment and Transportation Committee.

Approval of Agenda

Alexis Henning **MOVED** to approve the agenda. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED**.

There was no correspondence to report.

Reports

Update on Employment First Legislation

Rich Sanders reported that this committee has been asked to take the lead on employment and transportation issues. Employment First legislation will be a top priority for the upcoming legislative session. He stated that Representative Millett and her staff are working judiciously on draft legislation relating to Employment First.

Rich Sanders stated that plans are underway to host an Employment First Summit sometime in mid-November.

Update on the Disability Employment Initiative

Rich Sanders stated that the Disability Employment Initiative is completing their third year. He stated that the work has mainly been directed in an effort to educate staff at job centers across the state on disability awareness, accessibility, assistive technology, and the use of integrated resources to develop comprehensive plans towards employment. They have also implemented Social Security's Ticket to Work program to assist beneficiaries receiving Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance with returning to work and helping them to understand how wages affect their benefits.

Rich Sanders stated that the grant is ending in October, and they were denied another three years of funding because they had not expended enough funds by a certain period. They applied for a continuation application with funds to be expended by July, which they were successful in doing. They are now applying for another three years of funding to continue the grant with the Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. Rich noted they have a really good chance of getting it, as Alaska was recognized out of the first-round states as being a national leader in asset building activities, Ticket to Work, and staff training.

Rich Sanders reported that the Ticket to Work program is rapidly growing in Alaska. He stated that the rules have changed so that the providers get payments much faster based on outcomes; people going to work, maintaining work, and people that are going above the limit of substantial gainful activity. Currently there are 20 people signed up in the Ticket to Work program; 14 are active, 10 are working above substantial gainful activity, and the rest have dropped out for a variety of different reasons. He stated that the Department of Labor has an on-staff benefits counselor doing the initial benefits plan for beneficiaries and also providing ongoing advice as clients' employment situations change.

Rich Sanders explained the fiscal notes that come with reimbursement. He noted that when the Department of Labor's agencies and one-stop job centers work collaboratively to benefit a client, it becomes a win-win for everyone in that agencies get full reimbursement for the services they provided, and the job center gets income from continuing to help clients maintain employment.

Rich Sanders reported that he will be meeting with the Trust to talk about using bridge funding to build a system that would incorporate benefits planner training. He is planning to recommend they bring in Virginia Commonwealth, the contractors for Social Security, to do the benefits planner training.

Rich Sanders reported that he attended a Trust Planning Committee meeting last week and noted that the Trustees brought forth the idea of significant long-term funding for employment for beneficiaries. In the past the Trust has focused on a strong workforce initiative, and now they are shifting towards programs that are focused on getting beneficiaries back to work and giving them long-term supports. He and Teresa Holt will be

meeting with the Trustees to define what they really looking for with this new focus so that by the time the Trust meets in September, the Council will be able to give the Trust solid information on different types of strategies and programs that can assist in getting more beneficiaries back to work.

Rich Sanders noted that there will be a job posting for a new position to be the lead working with one-stop job centers and their partners. The position will be housed at the Council and will be on Workplace Alaska by the end of next week.

Update on the Alaska Integrated Employment

Rich Sanders stated that the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative is coming to the conclusion of their first year, and they have made great strides in getting all the advisory boards together and getting a training coordinator and curriculum underway. The Integrated Employment Initiative grant is focused on youth with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities that are in transition.

He noted that the Peer Power group has hired a new advisor, Tracy Golly, and they are in the process of developing their initial plans and defining roles. Peer Power will be instrumental in hosting job fairs, developing job clubs, providing training for youth, and working with employers and agencies to educate them about customized employment models.

Rich Sanders stated that they did a customized and self-employment training in July in Anchorage and Fairbanks. There was a wide variety of attendees, such as service providers and representatives from school districts and from Vocational Rehabilitation. He stated that they also did two-day foundations of customized employment training course that provided participants with examples of customized employment and walked through the steps of customized employment, answered a lot of questions, and also provided them with templates to use to start doing customized employment services. In both sites, Anchorage and Fairbanks, they will follow up with six or seven providers who will go through eight weeks of individualized training. They will work with one individual throughout that time and take them through the entire process, and the providers will develop a vocational profile. Their final report will be reviewed by the trainer from Center for Human Development for quality assurance

feedback. Once it passes the quality assurance guidelines for services and reporting, it can be shared with DVR so the provider can become a certified provider with DVR. Rich noted that they expect to move this training model to Juneau in November and then to the Kenai Peninsula early next year.

Rich Sanders stated that the next advisory board meeting is scheduled for October 1st. They are looking to the Policy and Regulations Committee to better define services so that they will be in alignment with the definitions that Senior and Disability Services has specifically relating to the home and community-based waivers. They will also develop a proposal that addresses a 15-minute billing increment for some services. He reported that the new Integrated Employment grant proposal was submitted in June.

Rich Sanders reported that the Center for Human Development is doing a survey of families regarding employment supports and barriers. The results of that survey are expected by mid-September. He noted that the survey results will be available to be used at the Employment First Summit.

Rich Sanders reported he and Patrick Reinhart are working on the business and industry portion of the grant, and they have made good connections with the Process Industry Career Consortium. Rich Sanders has joined the Society for Human Resources Managers and will be reestablishing relationships and looking to do a presentation on customized employment and the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative in the future. Rich Sanders has joined the Rotary, and will also become more active in the state and city Chambers of Commerce.

Update from the Alaska Mobility Coalition

David Levy, with the Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC), expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to speak to committee members. He is interested in learning about the different employment projects that are going on around the state and specifically what the Governor's Council is taking the lead on.

David Levy explained that the Alaska Mobility Coalition is a private, non-profit membership association. They represent and advocate for public transportation around the state. They have approximately 146 members from Bethel to Prince of Wales Island and everything in between. Their member agencies provide over 7 million rides annually for people to

get to work and to school and to medical appointments. They have been around for approximately 10 years. They recognize that there is a strong relationship between employment and transportation.

David Levy reported that AMC is co-sponsoring the Annual Alaska Transit Conference in Juneau October 21st through Oct 24th, 2013. They are planning to have presentations by the Governor and/or the Lieutenant Governor, as well as Senator Begich and Senator Murkowski. They will be talking about the ADA and transportation and looking at accessible taxi services. He noted that there will be scholarships available and that information should be coming out in the next week.

Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

Lucy Odden reported that the upcoming meetings and conferences are as follows:

- Governor's Council meeting in Anchorage, October 2nd – 4th, 2013
- 2013 Alaska Transit Conference in Juneau, October 21st – 24th, 2013,
- Trust Mini Advocacy Summits – to be announced
- Employment First Summit in Anchorage – to be announced

Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Employment and Transportation Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 10th, 2013 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

Adjournment

David Levy **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED** and the meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.